



**Eddie A. Perez**  
**Mayor**

## **MAYOR PEREZ'S BUDGET MESSAGE**

### **---NEWS RELEASE---**

(April 22, 2008)--- Mayor Eddie A. Perez has released his recommended budget for fiscal year 2008-2009, which calls for investments in public safety, education, school construction, and neighborhood economic development. Mayor Perez says, "We must continue to grow Hartford by increasing homeownership, creating jobs, reducing blight, and having a safe and vibrant city. We have made so much progress in the last six years, we cannot afford to lose ground now."

The Mayor goes on to say, "Just like families sitting down at the kitchen table or at their computer, the City too must prioritize expenditures and balance the check book. Our priorities are public safety and education, but we must also take into account increased construction costs, increased energy costs, and increased health care costs."

"Governing for Results" is how the Mayor articulates the investments being made in the city. The 2008-2009 Recommended General Fund Budget of \$552,000,000 reflects a 5% increase over the current year revised budget. This increase translates to 50 more firefighters and 30 more police officers; more programs for young people and seniors; and maintaining city services at current levels. A 10% property tax increase will be needed to maintain this progress. It is important to point out that there was no increase in taxes last year.

The City has already instituted a hiring freeze, created energy saving programs, is better utilizing technology, and has grown the Grand List. To put things in perspective by putting all the numbers in today's dollars, adjusting for inflation:

1. In 1990, the property tax burden on Hartford residents and businesses was more than \$338 million
2. In 2007, it was about \$228 million
3. That means the tax burden has actually been reduced by almost \$110 million

The Capital City has maintained a strong bond rating by growing the fund balance, investing in critical infrastructure like roads, schools, and libraries, and funding pensions at over 100%.

Of course, if the State fully funds PILOT, Payment in Lieu of Taxes, that money will go a long way to providing property tax relief for residents, small, and large businesses.

Mayor Perez says, "Hartford is not unique to this balancing act situation. Every town and every city in this state is facing tough financial choices. Hartford chooses to grow, but we need to do it prudently. I look forward to working with City Council to finalize a budget that will invest in the City's future as well as spend today's dollars wisely."

The mayor will make his formal budget presentation to Council on Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>.